

REQUEST FOR INITIAL PROPOSAL (RFIP) FOR AWARD OF A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

GENERAL INFORMATION

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA/ORD/NERL/HEASD-03-TBN19384

Title of Assistance Opportunity: The Research Apprenticeship Program for High School Students in Vicinity of Research Triangle Park, N.C.

Posted Date: June 23, 2003

Original Due Date for Initial Proposals: August 22, 2003

Current Due Date for Initial Proposals: August 22, 2003

CFDA Number: 66.607, Training and Fellowships for the Environmental Protection Agency

Statutory Authority for Award of Assistance: The Statutory Authorities for this cooperative training agreement are Clean Air Act, Section 103; Clean Water Act, Section 104; Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1442; Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001; and Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 308.

Eligible Applicants: Assistance under this program is generally available to States, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S., including the District of Columbia, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private nonprofit institutions and individuals.

Cost Sharing Requirements: None.

Anticipated Federal Involvement: The EPA Project Officer will provide input to the recipient on the recommended training for the students at the recipient's site. In addition, the EPA Project Officer will arrange for personnel to provide assistance to the recipient in the evaluation of applications for the program. EPA will provide mentors for 6 weeks each summer for up to ten students. EPA will also arrange for EPA scientists to give presentations to the students at the recipient's site one Saturday per month during the school year.

E.O. 12372: This RFIP is excluded from coverage under Executive Order 12372.

Amendments: Amendments will be posted on this website and the due date for initial proposals will be extended if deemed appropriate.

DESCRIPTION

Background: The Research Apprenticeship Program (RAP) began in 1990 as a collaborative effort between EPA's Office of Research and Development in Research Triangle Park, NC and an historically black college/university (HBCU) located in Raleigh, NC. The program was established to encourage high school students to pursue advanced degrees in math, science, and engineering by: 1) enriching the scientific and mathematic concepts that students study in the classroom; 2) providing the opportunity to interact with scientists ; 3) developing effective scientific research and technical skills; and 4) enhancing students' motivation, self-confidence, and desire to achieve. Students accepted into the RAP must demonstrate superior ability in math and science, live in the vicinity of Research Triangle Park, N.C., and be in grades 9 through 12. Students in the RAP must maintain high academic performance in high school and strict attendance standards to remain in the program. Participating students receive a stipend under the cooperative agreement

Students enter the program as 9th graders and continue through the 12th grade. Currently, there are eight to ten positions for each of the four grades for a total of 34 students. All of the current students reside in Wake County, N.C. There are two sessions: the academic year and the summer. During the academic year three Saturdays each month, students attend classes, workshops, and monthly interactive presentations by EPA scientists at the recipient's site.

During the summer, the 24 rising 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students attend 6 weeks of classes and workshops at the recipient's site. The eight rising seniors apprentice with EPA mentors in Research Triangle Park and are transported to the EPA facility by the recipient. This intensive experience immerses the students in scientific research and culminates in a research forum at EPA during which each student presents their project to an audience that includes the mentors, other students in the program, their families, and EPA scientists.

The cooperative agreement that EPA uses to fund the RAP is due to expire in September, 2003, though an extension through December 31, 2003 is planned. The EPA is seeking an applicant willing to continue the program or one of a similar nature for the next five years. The successful applicant would be expected to assimilate those students who have not graduated and to provide opportunities for new students to participate. Applicants should propose their approach for continuing the program for the existing students, their approach for new students, and how these two groups will be coordinated. Refer to the section Technical Review below for information to be included in the proposal.

Limitations: None.

Funding Priorities/Focus: Priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate the potential for successfully encouraging capable high school students in the fields of science and engineering and minimizing transition issues for the 34 students in the current program.

Estimated:

Number of Awards: 1

Amount and Range of Individual Awards: Up to \$1,375,000 total over 5 years

Funding: Incremental funding of up to \$275,000 expected each year
(approximately \$200,000 in FY03)

Project Period(s): 1/1/04 to 9/30/08

Supplemental Applications: Applications for supplemental awards of existing EPA assistance agreements will not be eligible to compete for this assistance opportunity.

EVALUATION FACTORS AND PROCESS

Minimum Criteria: To be considered, an applicant must have demonstrated experience in training high school students from diverse backgrounds and have appropriate classroom and laboratory facilities located within an fifty (50) mile radius of the U.S. EPA in Research Triangle Park.

Administrative Review: All initial proposals will be subjected to an administrative review to ensure they conform with the requirements of this RFIP. EPA may reject any applications that fail to conform to the requirements of the RFIP.

Relevancy Review: Initial proposals that are found administratively acceptable will be subjected to a review for relevancy to EPA's mission to support the advancement of environmental science. Initial proposals may be rejected if they are found to lack relevance.

Technical Review: Initial proposals that are found administratively acceptable and relevant shall be reviewed for technical merit by at least one internal EPA reviewer who is able to demonstrate both technical expertise and a lack of any conflict of interest. The proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated experience in training high school students from diverse backgrounds (20%)
2. Adequate classroom and laboratory facilities located within an fifty (50) mile radius of the U.S. EPA in Research Triangle Park, NC (20%)
3. Proposed approach for encouraging students to pursue advanced degrees in math, science, and engineering (40%)
4. Proposed approach for transition of the 34 students in the current program (20%)

Other Factors: In the event that the top rated proposals are essentially equivalent, preference will be given to an institution that is classified as a Historically Black College/University (HBCU).

Evaluation Process: EPA will conduct the evaluation of initial proposals and make a selection of the applicant(s) for award. The applicant(s) selected for award will be

requested to submit a full, detailed application in accordance with the guidance provided by EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment (<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/>).

Rejection: Applications may be rejected because they fail to comply with the administrative requirements of the RFIP, they are found to lack relevancy, they are judged technically unacceptable, or they are not deemed suitable for award due to other factors (if identified). EPA will promptly notify those applicants whose initial proposal is rejected. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and make no awards.

Disputes: Disputes shall be resolved pursuant to the process described in 40 CFR 30.63 and Part 31, subpart F.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

How to Submit:

- i. By mail, to: Barbara Blackwell
Mail Code: E205-04
U.S. EPA/National Exposure Research Laboratory
Research Triangle Park, NC 27711
- ii. By email: blackwell.barbara@epa.gov
- iii. In person: Barbara Blackwell
U.S. EPA
109 T.W. Alexander Drive
Research Triangle Park, N.C.

EPA reserves the right to make additional copies of initial proposals in sufficient quantity for distribution to the reviewers.

When to Submit: To be considered timely, initial proposals must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service, hand-delivered, or electronically delivered to the Agency, or include official delivery service documentation indicating EPA acceptance from a delivery service, on or before 3:00 p.m. local time on the due date established above.

What to Submit: At a minimum, the initial proposal should consist of the following:

- A cover sheet that identifies the RFIP title and identification number, name and address of the applicant, point of contact and telephone number for the applicant, and the date submitted.
- Technical proposal that addresses the criteria listed above and includes curriculum vitae for the project director and primary staff. Proposals should not exceed 15 single-sided pages with 1 inch margins and 12-point font.
- A brief budget estimate for the project that is broken down into direct labor, fringe benefits, equipment, student stipends, travel, other direct costs and overhead with summaries for each year and the total for the

entire project. Indicate any proposed cost sharing.

Confidential Information: Clearly mark information considered confidential. EPA will make final confidentiality decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR, Part 2, Subpart B.

Questions: Applicants who need assistance or have any questions should contact Barbara Blackwell

- Telephone Number: 919-541-2886
- Fax Number: 919-541-0509
- Email Address: blackwell.barbara@epa.gov

Do not attempt to seek information regarding this RFIP from any other source as the information provided may be erroneous. Questions that are considered significant will be answered via an amendment to this RFIP.